

**In the claims:**

Please amend claims 1, 5, 11, 22, 34, and 35 as follows:

1. (Once Amended) A method of forming an interlevel dielectric comprising the steps
- of:
- providing a first dielectric layer over a surface of a substrate situated on a semiconductor wafer;
- depositing a conductive layer on said first dielectric layer, the conductive layer having an upper surface and a lower surface;
- depositing an additional layer on said conductive layer;
- patterning said conductive layer and said additional layer by:
- forming a patterned mask layer on said additional layer; and
- etching through said additional layer and said conductive layer and into said first dielectric layer, leaving a space between adjacent remaining portions of said conductive layer, said adjacent remaining portions of said conductive layer forming lines of conductive material;
- depositing a layer of dielectric material having a dielectric constant of less than about 3.6 to fill said space, the layer of dielectric material extending above the upper surface of the adjacent lines of conductive material and below the lower surface of the adjacent lines of conductive material but not directly over or under the upper and lower surfaces of the adjacent lines of conductive material;
- removing said layer of dielectric material from the top thereof downward to at least to the level of the top of said additional layer; and
- depositing a second dielectric layer over all layers on said surface of said substrate.

B<sup>2</sup> sub  
C<sup>1</sup> 5. (Once Amended) The method as defined in Claim 1, wherein at least one of said first  
and second dielectric layers comprises silicon dioxide.

sub  
C1 of: 11. (Twice Amended) A method of forming an interlevel dielectric comprising the steps

providing a first dielectric layer over a surface of a substrate situated on a semiconductor wafer;

depositing a conductive layer on said first dielectric layer, the conductive layer having a lower surface and an upper surface;

patterning said conductive layer by:

forming a mask layer on said conductive layer; and

etching through said conductive layer and into said first dielectric layer, leaving a space between adjacent remaining portions of said conductive layer that extends below the lower surface of said conductive layer, said adjacent remaining portions of said conductive layer forming lines of conductive material each having an upper surface;

depositing an additional layer on the upper surfaces of lines of conductive material and on said first dielectric layer;

depositing a layer of dielectric material having a dielectric constant of less than about 3.6 to fill said space, the layer of dielectric material extending above the upper surface of the lines of conductive material and below the lower surface of the lines of conductive material but not directly over or under the upper and lower surfaces of the lines of conductive material;

removing said layer of dielectric material from the top thereof downward to at least to the level of the top of said additional layer; and

depositing a second dielectric layer over all layers on said surface of said substrate.

sub C1 of: 22. (Twice Amended) A method of forming an interlevel dielectric comprising the steps

providing a first dielectric layer over a surface of a substrate situated on a semiconductor wafer;

depositing a metal layer on said first dielectric layer, the metal layer having a lower surface and an upper surface;

patterning said metal layer by:

forming a mask layer on said metal layer; and

etching through said metal layer and into said first dielectric layer, leaving a space between adjacent remaining portions of said metal layer that extends below the lower surface of said metal layer, said adjacent remaining portions of said metal layer forming metal lines each having an upper surface;

depositing a thin layer of silicon dioxide conformably over said metal lines and selectively on said upper surfaces of said metal lines;

depositing a layer of dielectric material having a dielectric constant of less than about 3.6 to fill said space, the layer of dielectric material extending above the upper surface of the lines of conductive material and below the lower surface of the lines of conductive material but not directly over or under the upper and lower surfaces of the lines of conductive material;

removing said layer of dielectric material from the top thereof downward to at least to the level of the top of said additional layer; and

depositing a second dielectric layer over all layers on said surface of said substrate.

sub  
C1

34. (Twice Amended) A method of forming an interlevel dielectric comprising:

providing a first dielectric layer over a surface of a substrate;

forming a conductive layer on said first dielectric layer, the conductive layer having a lower surface and an upper surface;

forming an additional layer on said conductive layer;

B5 forming lines of conductive material having spaces therebetween that extend below the lower surface of said conductive layer from the conductive layer;

filling the spaces between the lines of conductive material with dielectric material having a dielectric constant of less than about 3.6; and

forming a second dielectric layer on the additional layer;

wherein portions of the dielectric material having a dielectric constant of less than about 3.6 extend both above and below the adjacent lines of conductive material but do not extend directly over or under the upper and lower surfaces of the lines of conductive material.

35. (Twice Amended) A method of forming an interlevel dielectric that reduces fringe capacitance between adjacent lines of conductive material, the method comprising:

providing a first dielectric layer over a surface of a substrate;

forming a conductive layer on said first dielectric layer, the conductive layer having a lower surface;

forming an additional layer on said conductive layer;

etching through said additional layer and said conductive layer and into said first dielectric layer, leaving a space between adjacent remaining portions of said conductive layer that extends below the lower surface of said conductive layer, said adjacent remaining portions of said conductive layer forming lines of conductive material;

filling the spaces between adjacent remaining portions of said conductive layer with dielectric material having a dielectric constant of less than about 3.6; and

forming a second dielectric layer on the additional layer;

wherein the dielectric material having a dielectric constant of less than about 3.6 extends both above and below, but not directly over, the respective adjacent lines of conductive material sufficient to reduce the fringe capacitance therebetween.

Please add new claims 36-38 as follows:

36. The method as defined in Claim 1, wherein the layer of dielectric material having a dielectric constant of less than about 3.6 extends both above and below the adjacent lines of conductive material sufficient to reduce the fringe capacitance therebetween.

*sub B6 C2*  
37. The method as defined in Claim 11, wherein the layer of dielectric material having a dielectric constant of less than about 3.6 extends both above and below the adjacent lines of conductive material sufficient to reduce the fringe capacitance therebetween.

38. The method as defined in Claim 22, wherein the layer of dielectric material having a dielectric constant of less than about 3.6 extends both above and below the adjacent lines of conductive material sufficient to reduce the fringe capacitance therebetween.